

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

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AMCONSUL KARACHI

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E.O. 11652: N/A

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SUBJECT: BHUTTO TOUR OF PUNJAB - POLITICAL AFFAIRS

REF: LAHORE 1437

BEGIN SUMMARY: DURING PRIME MINISTER BHUTTO'S 8-DAY TOUR OF SOUTHERN PUNJAB NOV 2-10, HE REPEATEDLY ATTACKED NATIONAL AWAMI PARTY (NAP) AND ITS LEADER WALI KHAN. IN BAHAWALPUR DIVISION, HE FRONTALLY ATTACKED OPPOSITION DEMANDS BY DECLARING IN PUBLIC SPEECH THAT NEITHER BAHAWALPUR NOR KARACHI WOULD BE MADE SEPARATE PROVINCE. OTHER SUBJECTS HAMMERED ON IN VIRTUALLY EVERY SPEECH INCLUDED ACHIEVEMENTS OF HIS GOVERNMENT, HIS EFFORTS TO PURGE PPP OF CORRUPT ELEMENTS, HIS INSISTENCE THAT GENERAL ELECTIONS WOULD NOT BE HELD BEFORE NORMAL APRIL 1977 DEADLINE, AND PRAISE FOR ARMED FORCES (WITH PARTICULAR REFERENCE TO ARMY IN BALUCHISTAN) WHILE CLAIMING THAT BALUCHISTAN INSURGENCY HAD BEEN "CRUSHED." HE ALSO MADE PASSING REFERENCE TO UDF PARTIES OTHER THAN NAP, BUT ONLY MENTIONED TEHRIK-I-ISTIQLAL ONCE IN APPARENT EFFORT TO DEMONSTRATE THAT IT IS NOT IMPORTANT ENOUGH TO CONCERN HIM.

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BHUTTO INDICATED THAT NEXT STEP OF HIS "GRAND TOUR"

WOULD BE VISIT TO MULTAN DIVISION IN EARLY DECEMBER. CROWDS THAT CAME TO HEAR BHUTTO IN EVERY LOCATION WERE VERY LARGE BY LOCAL STANDARDS, AND GOVERNMENT CLAIMS NOT TO HAVE ARRANGED THEM. CROWDS SEEMED TO BE IMPRESSED BY WHAT PM HAD TO SAY AND WE ESTIMATE HE CAN PROBABLY CHALK UP HIS FIRST LEG OF TOUR AS SUCCESS. PARTS OF IT WERE REMINI MENT OF RELIGIOUS REVIVAL, WITH SEVERAL PROMINENT OPPOSITION PERSONALITIES JOINING PPP IN PREARRANGED SHOWS AT SPEECH SITES. END SUMMARY.

1. PRIME MINISTER BHUTTO BEGAN 8-DAY TOUR OF PUNJAB ON NOV 2 WITH DRAMATIC ARRIVAL BY HELICOPTER AT THE

PAKISTAN MONUMENT IN LAHORE (REFTEL). HE MOVED TO BAHAWALNAGAR NOV 4 AND BEGAN SERIES OF 9 MAJOR SPEECHES IN 6 DAYS (HE MADE NO SPEECH ON NOV 7). IN LAHORE AND BAHAWALNAGAR BHUTTO COMPLAINED ABOUT PRACTICE OF TAKING CHILDREN OUT OF SCHOOL FOR RITUALISTIC WELCOMING CEREMONIES, BUT PRACTICE SEEMED TO CONTINUE THROUGHOUT TOUR.

2. AS REPORTED PREVIOUSLY, BHUTTO SPENT CONSIDERABLE ENERGY CASTIGATING NAP AND ITS ALLEGED FOREIGN CONNECTIONS. HE REPEATEDLY MENTIONED WHAT HE CALLED THE "TWO LONDON PLANS," SAYING FIRST ONE HAD SUCCEEDED IN SEPARATION OF EAST PAKISTAN BUT CLAIMING HE HAD FRUSTRATED SECOND ONE. HE IMPLIED THAT NAP WAS INVOLVED IN BOTH PLANS AND LABELED NAP LEADER WALI KHAN AS HYPOCRITE ON ORDER OF SEHIKH MUJIB-UR-REHMAN, WHO PROFESSED LOVE FOR PAKISTAN BUT ACTUALLY ENGAGED IN CONSPIRACIES TO DESTROY COUNTRY. HE DECLARED UPON TWO OCCASIONS THAT INSURGENCY IN BALUCHISTAN HAD

BEEN "CRUSED," AND SAID THAT "GAME" OF NAP AND ITS "AFGHANISTAN COLLABORATORS" HAD BEEN "DEFEATED."

3. PRIME MINISTER TOOK TIME TO MENTION UDF IN VIRTUALLY EVERY SPEECH, GENERALLY TAKING TACK THAT HE DID NOT FEAR THIS FRONT, THAT UDF DID NOT DISAGREE WITH GOP POLICIES ON RELIGIOUS ISSUE AND THAT UDF'S SOLE PURPOSE WAS TO OPPOSE HIS "PROGRESSIVE" ECONOMIC POLICIES. HE MADE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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ONLY ONE REFERENCE TO ASGHAR KHAN AND TEHRIK-I-ISLGQLATHN APPARANTLY TO DEMONSTRATE THAT TEHRIK WAS NOT IMPORTANT ENOUGH TO CONCERN HIM.

4. INS AHAWALPUR ON NOV 8, PRIME MINISTER MADE FRONTAL ASSAULT ON ONLY ISSUE OPPOSITION RAISED WITH HIM DURING TOUR: SEPARATE PROVINCIAL STATUS FOR BAHAWALPUR. HE

MADE CATEGORIC DECLARATION THAT HIS GOVERNMENT WOULD NEVER ALLOW EITHER BAHAWALPUR OR KARACHI TO BECOME SEPARATE PROVINCE. HE CHASTIZED THOSE WHO HAD RAISED SUBJECT WITH HIM BY SAYING THAT ONLY PEOPLE WHO WERE INTERESTED IN SEPARATE PROVINCIAL STATUS FOR THOSE TWO SECTORS OF COUNTRY WERE PEOPLE WHO WANTED TO BECOME CHIEF MINISTERS AND GOVERNORS.

5. ON SEVERAL OCCASIONS, BHUTTO ATTEMPTED TO LAY TO REST RUMORS THAT GENERAL ELECTIONS WOULD BE HELD BEFORE NORMAL APRIL 1977 DEADLINE. HE DENIED THAT CURRENT PREPARATIONS BEING MADE BY ELECTION COMMISSION WERE INDICATION THAT GENERAL ELECTIONS WOULD COME SOON, AND POINTED OUT INSTEAD THAT LOCAL BODY ELECTIONS WERE DUE IN PUNJAB IN NEAR FUTURE. WHEN TALKING ABOUT ELECTIONS, HE REPEATEDLY EMPHASIZED HIS INTENTION TO PURGE PPP OF CORRUPT ELEMENTS, AND SAID THAT IN FUTURE PARTY WOULD ONLY GIVE TICKETS TO HONEST AND SINCERE WORKERS.

6. BHUTTO BEGAN EVERY SPEECH BY RECOUNTING "ACCOMPLISHMENTS" OF HIS GOVERNMENT IN ITS NEARLY 3 YEARS OF OFFICE. SPECIFICALLY, HE CITED ARRANGING RETURN OF LAND CAPTURED BY INDIA IN 1971 WAR; RETURN OF POWS; "ISLAMIC AND COMPLETELY DEMOCRATIC" 1973 CONSTITUTION; "REFORMS" IN A NUMBER OF FIELDS SUCH AS AGRICULTURE, INDUSTRY, EDUCATION AND HEALTH; ISLAMIC SUMMIT IN LAHORE; AND, "SOLUTION" OF AHMADIYA PROBLEM. ALSO IN VIRTUALLY EVERY SPEECH HE MADE GLOWING TRIBUTES TO PAKISTAN ARMED FORCES, PARTICULARLY TO ARMY FOR ITS ROLE IN BALUCHISTAN.

7. COMMENT: THERE WAS SOMETHING OF RELIGIOUS REVIVAL ABOUT BHUTTO'S APPEARANCES DURING FIRST STOP OF "GRAND TOUR." SEVERAL PROXIMATE PERSONALITIES LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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IN BAHAWALPUR ANNOUNCED JOINING PPP DURING HIS PUBLIC MEETINGS, SOME OF WHOM WERE MEMBERS OF OTHER POLITICAL PARTIES. FROM ACCOUNTS OF TOUR IN PRESS INCLUDING OPPOSITION PRESS, WE BELIEVE PRIME MINISTER CAN DEFINITELY CHALK UP TRIP AS POLITICAL SUCCESS. CROWDS THAT SAW HIM EVERYWHERE WERE VERY LARGE BY PUNJAB STANDARDS, AND ACCORDING TO ALL ACCOUNTS WERE NOT MERELY USUAL CROWDS OF PEASANTS PAID BY GOVERNMENT TO SWELL RANKS OF ADULATORS. BHUTTO'S HAMMERING AWAY AT FOREIGN "ENEMIES" LIKE INDIA AND AFGHANISTAN WAS, AS USUAL, ENORMOUSLY POPULAR WITH PUNJABIS, AS WAS HIS CONTINUING PRAISE FOR ARMED SERVICES WHICH, OF COURSE, RECRUIT MOST OF THEIR PERSONNEL FROM PUNJAB. ATTENTIONS PAID TO GROUPS AND INDIVIDUALS IN BAHAWALPUR DIVISION WILL ALSO BE APPRECIATED BY PEOPLE THERE, WHILE REST OF PUNJAB WILL CERTAINLY BE PLEASED TO

HEAR HIS CATEGORICAL REFUSAL TO MAKE BAHAWALPUR SEPARATE PROVINCE. ECONOMIC SUBJECTS BEING REPORTED SEPARATELY.

8. UPON NUMBER OF OCCASIONS, PRIME MINISTER INDICATED HE WOULD RETURN TO PUNJAB TO CONTINUE TOUR IN EARLY DECEMBER. ON NOV 11, UPON HIS RETURN FROM BHUTTO'S ENTOURAGE, PUNJAB CHIEF MINISTER SPECIFIED TO PRESS IN LAHORE THAT SECOND LEG OF PRIME MINISTER'S TOUR WOULD BE ONE-WEEK TRIP THROUGH MULTAN DIVISION BEGINNING DEC 1. ACCORDING TO NOV 12 PAKISTAN TIMES, BHUTTO IS EXPECTED TO BEGIN VISIT TO SARGHODA DIVISION DURING FIRST WEEK OF JANUARY.
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